



Voting Information News

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Voting Assistance Officers

"To Do" This Month:

✓ Remind citizens to vote and return any absentee ballots regardless of when they receive it up to election day.

✓ International toll-free fax numbers are available at: <http://www.fvap.gov/services/faxing.html>.

✓ Visit www.fvap.gov more often to keep current on news and updates for UOCAVA citizens.

✓ Ensure people know how to get in touch with you for absentee voting assistance. Set aside time to assist those with absentee voting questions. The Federal Voting Assistance Program is available to help you if you cannot find the information you need locally.

✓ Select "Changes to the Voting Assistance Guide" from the FVAP website and ensure your hard copy of the Guide is updated.

A roundup of voting news from the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) for voters, potential voters and those who assist voters.

Only Days Before The Election!

The following explains the three possible scenarios citizens face within days of the elections and guidance for the VAO for assisting the citizen:

Scenario 1. The citizen has received the state ballot:

Vote and return it immediately! Generally, if a state allows late counting of ballots, the ballot envelope must have been mailed on or before election day. In addition, FVAP recommends that the citizens always vote and return their regular state absentee ballot, regardless of the day it is received, provided it is mailed by election day.

Scenario 2. The citizen has not received the requested ballot:

If the citizen has requested the absentee ballot, and has not received the regular state ballot, the citizen may be qualified to use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). The citizen should obtain a FWAB now, vote it, fax it (if allowed by the state) and mail it immediately! The citizen can obtain the FWAB from the Voting Assistance Officer (VAO) or at a US embassy or consulate or American organization overseas such as Democrats Abroad or Republicans Abroad. An on-line version of the FWAB is available on the FVAP website at <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/onlinefwab.html>

Important note: If the citizen receives the state absentee ballot after submitting the FWAB, he or she should vote and return the state ballot up to and including election day.

The citizen should contact his or her VAO to determine registration status and what options are provided by the state or county according to the VAG and information

obtained from the FVAP website.

The VAO may email FVAP or the voter's local election official providing the voter information (below) to obtain the status of the ballot. Further steps will be determined at that point.

Information needed when emailing to vote@fvap.ncr.gov:

□ The Subject of the email should include the State name and a short description of the problem (e.g. Voter from Washington State has not received Ballot).

□ The email should include as much of the following information as possible: The voter's full name, DOB, last four digits of the SSN, the county the FPCA was mailed to, the complete address in the county where he or she claims residence, fax number, email address and phone number, and the address where the citizen asked to mail the ballot.

Scenario 3. The citizen has not registered or requested an absentee ballot:

In some states there may still be time for action. The citizen should contact the VAO to determine, using the VAG and the FVAP website, if the registration is still open and what methods the state allows for expediting FPCA and ballot delivery.

The citizen should obtain and complete an FPCA, fax or email it (if state/county allows), and mail the hardcopy immediately to the LEO. If the state/county allows faxing and or emailing the blank and the voted ballot, the citizen should request it on the FPCA and provide email and fax numbers as required. ☑

Share your good ideas!

Send your good ideas and lessons learned to your Department of State or Service Voting Action Officer. (Contact information on page 3)

"To Do" This Month (continued):

✓ Ensure you have sufficient help to assist citizens you are responsible for. Certify additional VAOs by providing them with the E-Learning CD, FPCA, FWAB and refer them to www.fvap.gov for additional tools and resources. Send email to vote@fvap.ncr.gov for a copy of the E-Learning CD.

✓ Your Service Voting Action Plan is your "game plan". Link to your Service website from www.fvap.gov, download it and read it.

NOTE: The appearance of external hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement by the United States Federal Government, United States Department of Defense or the Federal Voting Assistance Program of the linked web sites, or the information, products or services contained therein. The Federal Voting Assistance Program does not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these locations.

Use The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot

Under the provisions of the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)*, the Federal Voting Assistance Program provides a "back-up" ballot, called the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot, or FWAB, should an absent uniformed services voter or a citizen residing outside the United States not receive his or her requested regular ballot from their state or territory.

Generally, a citizen can only use the FWAB under the following conditions:

- Be stateside but absent from his/her voting residence (for uniformed services members and their family members); OR be located outside the United States (for all UOCAVA citizens); **AND**
- Have requested a regular ballot early enough so the request is received by the appropriate local election official not later than the State deadline; OR the date that is 30 days before the general election, whichever is later; **AND**
- Have not received the requested regular absentee ballot from the state.

Hard copies of the FWAB are available at military installations from your unit or installation Voting Assistance Officer, from the nearest embassy or consular office, and from many organizations of US citizens overseas. An on-line version of the FWAB is available on the FVAP website at <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/onlinefwab.html>

A citizen who receives their state ballot after submitting a FWAB should also vote their state ballot, and return it to their local election official, up to and including election day. If both ballots arrive in time to meet the state's deadlines, local officials have procedures in place so that only one ballot is counted for each individual. ☑



The 2006 Integrated Voting Alternative Site

The Integrated Voting Alternative Site (IVAS) allows *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* citizens to see what electronic alternatives are permitted for the return of their voted ballot in their state of residence. The site is available through the FVAP website at http://www.fvap.gov/ivas/fvap_state_menu.html. ☑

45-Day Ballot Transit Time - A Legislative Best Practice

A 45-Day Ballot Transit Time is needed. One of the most frequent problems faced by military and citizens that live outside the U.S. is that they do not receive their absentee ballots in time to mark the ballot and return it to their state by the election deadline. The FVAP post-election surveys and Postal Service statistics indicate that a **45-day transit time is needed** for absentee ballots sent through international mail or the military APO/FPO (overseas) post offices. The problem often lies with the date absentee ballots are mailed by the states.

This round trip transit time is especially necessary because of the remote location of many military personnel and overseas citizens such as sailors and marines aboard ship, airmen and sailors at isolated tracking sites around the world, as well as Department of State personnel and citizen employees of American multinational corporations in remote areas.

The FVAP recommends a minimum of 45 days between the date the ballot is mailed to the citizen and the due date by which the citizen must return the voted ballot to the local election official for it to be counted. Allowing for sufficient mail transit time would help ensure that more citizens' votes would be counted,

especially for citizens voting from overseas. The FVAP also recommends that states expand this provision to allow a 45-day transit time for **all elections** in order to further ensure enfranchisement. FVAP Program Analysts work closely with state officials assisting them with written or verbal testimonies and providing sample language during the implementation process.

Under certain circumstances the FVAP may enter into an *ad hoc* agreement with a state or initiate court action through the Department of Justice to allow late counting. The FVAP will notify VAOs and the citizens regarding any agreements or changes by issuing news releases and publishing on the FVAP website and the *Voting Information News*.

To learn more about the states that have adopted and implemented this legislative best practice, see specific state by state instructions in the *Voting Assistance Guide*. ☒



Voting Action Officers

Department of State: Office of Overseas Citizens Services

Chief VAO: Mr. Jack Markey, **tel:** (202) 736-4937, **fax:** (202) 647-6201, **Email:** votinginfo@state.gov
Deputy VAO: Ms. Stefanie Eye, **tel:** (202) 647-5435, **fax:** (202) 647-6201

Service Voting Action Officers

U.S. Dept. of the Army: Mr. Alton Perry **tel:** (703) 325-4530 **DSN:** 221-4530; **fax:** (703) 325-4532
DSN fax: 221-4532, **Email:** alton.perryj@hoffman.army.mil,
https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/Active/TAGD/pssd/psb/votingindex.htm

U.S. Dept. of the Navy: LT David Truman **tel:** 1-866-U-ASK-NPC (827-5672) (select option 6 from menu),
fax: (901) 874-6825, **DSN fax:** 882-6825,
Email: vote@navy.mil, **http://www.cni.navy.mil/NavyVote/Index.html**

U.S. Dept. of the Air Force: Mr. John Lowrance **tel:** (210) 565-5000, **toll free:** 1-800 616-3775 (Select options 1, then 1, then 2 from menu), **DSN** 665-5000; **fax:** (210) 565-2543, **DSN fax:** 665-2543;
Email: afpc/dpffofvotefund@randolph.af.mil; **http://www.afcrossroads.com/VoteFund/Vote/default.htm**

U.S. Marine Corps: Mr. David E. James **tel:** (703) 784-9511, **DSN:** 278-9511; **fax:** (703) 784-9823,
DSN fax: 278-9823; **Email:** david.e.james@usmc.mil
https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/pls/portal/url/page/m_ra_home/MR/Personnel/Voting

U.S. Coast Guard: LTJG Dan Owen **tel:** (202)-267-1709, **fax:** (202) 267-4823;
Email: dowen@comdt.uscg.mil,
http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/g-wp/g-wpm/g-wpm-1/VotingAssistance/Voting_Assistance.htm

All of the above can also be reached through the DoD Voting Information Center and the FVAP Website.

Feel free to copy, redistribute, or use *Voting Information News* articles in other publications.

Federal Voting Assistance Program

Department of Defense
1155 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC
20301-1155

PHONE:
(703) 588-1584
DSN 425-1584

FAX
(703) 696-1352
DSN 426-1352

VOTING INFORMATION
CENTER (VIC):
(703) 588-1343
DSN 425-1343

TOLL FREE (VIC and FVAP
staff member):
1-800-438-VOTE (8683)

Visit our website for
international toll-free phone
and fax numbers.

EMAIL:
vote@fvap.ncr.gov

Comments or suggestions on
this newsletter are welcome.

Website:
www.fvap.gov

Vote!

WWW.FVAP.GOV

The FVAP website, www.fvap.gov, is home to a variety of information that is updated regularly with answers to almost any voting related question available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. At times it may be difficult for VAOs to assist all unit members and eligible family members one-on-one in completing the FPCA. VAOs should encourage voters to visit the FVAP website where they can find their state instructions for completing the FPCA, link to their state Election Sites and much more. Log on today and you will find:

- Information on absentee voting, including a list of "Frequently Asked Questions".
- The *Voting Assistance Guide*, which provides procedures for registration and absentee ballot requests, and other "Publications" such as "News Releases", "Voting Information Newsletter" and archived issues of *VIN*
- Links to state election sites where the citizen can read about upcoming state elections and gain access to candidate information. It is another great way for them to stay informed with local issues. Select "State Election Sites".
- A link where citizens can find their county of legal voting residence using your town/city and state. Select "What is My County?"
- The online alternative version of the FPCA, which is accepted by all states including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands (American Samoa and Guam do not accept the OFPCA). Citizens can print it, fill it out, and mail it to their local election official.
- A list of international toll free phone and fax numbers to contact the FVAP.
- Information on communicating with elected officials, including local, state, and federal offices, and tips for telephoning or writing their elected officials.
- Information for Armed Forces Recruitment Offices, including information on the *National Voter Registration Act (NVRA)* and voter registration information for military recruiters. Select "Military Recruiter Information".
- Links to the U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives, National Governor's association, and many more. ☒

Happy Thanksgiving!

Moving? Send an FPCA to notify your local election official. Also, send us an email so that you and your replacement can continue receiving this *newsletter*.

Federal Voting Assistance Program
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1155 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1155



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